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# ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENTS

OF

American Institutions for the Insane.

BY

JOHN H. CALLENDER, M. D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION.

NEWPORT, R. I., JUNE 26, 1883.



Published by Order of the Association.

UTICA, N. Y.

ELLIS H. ROBERTS & CO., PRINTERS, 60 GENESEE STREET.

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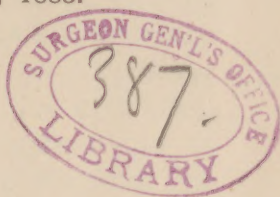
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# HISTORY AND WORK OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENTS OF AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS FOR THE INSANE—PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.\*

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JOHN H. CALLENDER, M. D.,

Medical Superintendent, Hospital for the Insane, Nashville, Tenn.

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The choice of a subject for the address prescribed for this occasion has been a matter of difficulty. While the field of labor of the membership of this Association is full of topics from which one pertinent might be selected, very many of the more important general features of psychiatry and the care and management of the insane have so often been ably and elaborately presented and discussed, as to induce me to refrain from attempting to offer any of them in a new form. Neither has it seemed entirely appropriate to go in search of some special subject relevant to our work not heretofore thoroughly considered by this body—a discourse regarding which would tend to elicit discussion. At its last annual meeting, the Association organized a number of standing committees whose reports will doubtless comprise a variety of interesting facts and subjects which will engage its time in profitable interchange of thought and debate, and this was the purpose of their appointment. For this reason it has

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\*Read at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane, held at Newport, R. I., June 26, 1883.

been deemed proper to abstain from proposing a thesis to invite argument. And, upon reflection, and in view of the fact that this is the first formal address in the history of the Association required of its presiding officer when about finally to relinquish the chair, I have thought the most appropriate theme would be a review of the work of the Association for the forty years of its history now nearly completed, with proper allusion to its founders, dead and living, and the earnest and faithful men who have contributed to make its influence so largely felt in the sphere of science and philanthropy, to which it is specially devoted.

Such a glance at its labors must needs be cursory, within the limits of an address of this character, and yet it will require us to take in view the progress which has been made since its establishment, in our knowledge of the pathological condition whose expression is called insanity; of the improvement which has been effected in the modes of its alleviation and restoration, and the custodial care of its hapless subjects; of the prominence which neural pathology has come to assert among the advanced thinkers of the medical profession, and, indeed, with all accurate observers; of the deliverances which, from time to time, have emanated from this body in regard to provision for the insane of all classes and the conduct of institutions established for them, and the success which has attended the principles they have inculcated; of the permanent wholesome impression these have made on the public mind in the direction of legislation in that behalf, and of some of the obstacles required to be encountered; of the difficult and responsible nature of the work, and of the jealousy and suspicion with which it is viewed by the vulgar and ignorant, and the censorious criticism it occasionally receives from those better informed; of its contribu-

tions to science in the solution of the problem of mental alienation in its various phases, and of the enlightened encouragement and aid it has afforded to the spirit of public charity; of the scrupulous conservatism with which it has recognized the legal rights and relations of the insane, and through the prudence it has taught, enabled institutions for the insane successfully to perform their work and yet foil ignorant or malicious mischief and avert opprobrium; and, finally, a comparison of the general results achieved in this great philanthropic sphere on this continent in its composite population and peculiar political systems, with those recorded under older nationalities and different political institutions. Though in portions of this country, and in the Dominion of Canada, much commendable work had been done prior to the formation of this Association, yet to it is clearly due alike the general admirable system of public care for the insane which now obtains, its present comprehensive scope in this country especially, and the laudable interest in the prevention of the malady, and the restoration and amelioration of the condition of its victims, which now so properly pervades the various communities from ocean to ocean, into which it is divided, and the merited reputation and public confidence now enjoyed by American hospitals for the insane.

The Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane was the result of an incidental conference, held at Staunton, Virginia, between Dr. Samuel B. Woodward, of Worcester, Massachusetts, and Dr. Francis T. Stribling, of the former place, both of them being at the time superintendents of public asylums for the insane in their respective States. Those two commonwealths—of the original thirteen,



each the oldest and most strictly typical of the civilizations of the north and of the south—were fitly representative of the broad and continental scope of the organization suggested at that interview, and the two men were equally representative in character and ability, of the noble design by which they were inspired. Dr. Woodward was the first superintendent of the institution at Worcester, serving it with signal success for fifteen years, and retiring at the age of sixty years, on account of failing health. Dr. Stribling was in charge of the Western Lunatic Asylum, of Virginia, for thirty-eight years, and died in the work, in the sixty-fifth year of his age. Both of them were justly eminent as physicians, and of wide repute in the specialty, and exerted commanding influence in the communities in which they wrought. The consultation at Staunton for the promotion of the usefulness of hospitals for the insane, and the project of a general meeting of all engaged in the care of that afflicted class, was soon communicated to Dr. Thomas S. Kirkbride, of Philadelphia, and Dr. William M. Awl, of Columbus, Ohio, and through their zealous and efficient coöperation, an assembly of superintendents of asylums for the insane was convoked at Philadelphia. This met on the 16th of October, 1844, numbering thirteen representatives of the twenty institutions, public and private, then existing in the United States and British Provinces of America. Of that roll of names distinguished for acquirements, executive capacity, and devotion to the interests of the insane, but three survive at the present time, Dr. Thomas S. Kirkbride, of Pennsylvania, Dr. Pliny Earle, of Massachusetts, and Dr. John S. Butler, of Connecticut, in the evening of lives well-spent and honored, and two of them yet at the head of renowned institutions, Dr. Kirkbride being in the forty-fourth



year of service in his original post. While all of that company of pioneers who have passed away, deserve grateful perpetuation in the memory of those who have succeeded to their work, and are entitled to the blessings of thousands who were benefited by their labors, it will not be deemed invidious to mention a few not already named, whose fame will long be conspicuous in the list of American alienists: Dr. Luther V. Bell, of Massachusetts; Dr. Amariah Brigham, of New York; and him in whose death this Association was bereaved but two years ago, the venerable Dr. Isaac Ray, of Philadelphia. Dr. Bell was a man of marked ability and varied attainments and shone in every sphere in which he appeared, as medical author, in political station, and as superintendent of the McLean Asylum for the Insane which he held for twenty years. As an acute observer and skillful diagnostician of mental disease, the specialty has furnished no superior to Dr. Bell, nor one more warmly enlisted in measures of provision for the insane. Dr. Brigham was an accomplished lecturer and author, the founder of the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF INSANITY, and the first superintendent of the New York State Lunatic Asylum at Utica, to which he was called from the Hartford Retreat. His life was prematurely ended for the good of the cause to which he was devoted, and which his peculiar qualities so fitted him to adorn and advance. From 1841 when he assumed charge of the Maine Hospital for the Insane, to 1881 when he died in Philadelphia where he had resided for a number of years, the name of Isaac Ray is a distinguished part of the history, and of the literature of the specialty in this country. During his career as hospital superintendent of twenty-seven years, he served the institutions of three States with great ability as an executive officer, and his learned and vigorous pen was constant

and abundant in valuable labor until the end of his life. Not alone his great and standard work on the Medical Jurisprudence of Insanity, but his contributions to journals and to the records of this body, rank him among the ripest and soundest intellects which have enriched the field of psychological science in any country. Nor should we pass from the contemplation of this group of the fathers without notice of the name of Galt, which in the persons of three members of the family claims greater antiquity and longer continuous service—at Williamsburg, Virginia, from 1773 to 1862—than any on the roster. The representative of that institution at Philadelphia was the third in the line, and was the author of a Treatise on Insanity of approved merit in its day, and is worthy to be classed with those who there inaugurated the onward movement in behalf of the insane. We may not enumerate the entire necrologic roll of those embalmed in memory, who, from time to time, have been distinguished in the annals of the body, but respect to its history demands honorable mention of such names as Awl, Fonerden, Benedict, Booth, Cutter, Waddell, Landor, Chipley, Green, Tyler, Ranney and Walker. This vein of allusion to those who have been prominent in devising liberal things for the alleviation of the most touching and pitiful malady which afflicts our race, would be incomplete, also, if reference were omitted of one who though not of the membership of this body, has ever been with it in spirit and purpose, and whose name is endeared to the insane, not of America only, but of Europe—that rare and elect lady and earnest philanthropist, Miss Dorothea L. Dix. Her life has been consecrated to the welfare of the insane in travel and visitation, in all becoming labor, and in appeal and exhortation to legislative bodies, and has received a rich

reward in practical results—the establishment of a number of the most excellent institutions of which this country can boast. The approaching sunset of a life so nobly employed is serene in the consciousness of duty done, and luminous with the admiration of her collaborators in the cause of humanity, whose efforts she has so successfully and unostentatiously aided.

A significant fact presented at the threshold of the history and recapitulation of the design and purposes of the Association, is found in the schedule of subjects which received attention at its first and second meetings. An enumeration of these serves to illustrate the enlightened and catholic views of the men who propounded them, and their prescient sagacity in regard to the important work with which they were commissioned. It embraces almost, if not quite, every topic which can properly pertain to the great object undertaken, and displays a thorough and minute apprehension of the details of every provision needful in mastering the subject of insanity, theoretically and practically, and the relations of its subjects to law and to society. In its scope, it leaves little, if anything to be added after the lapse of forty years, in which science in all departments, and all forms of skill and appliance, have made unexampled progress; and vindicates the body from the carping current in certain quarters, that its field of effort is trivial, restricted and inadequate to the object, and at most but meagrely scientific in direction, and that its career has exemplified an insufficiency of results.

In this connection, it may be profitable to rehearse a partial list of the subjects which constitute the foundation of the structure of its labors, and which, it is not extravagant to claim, have received, year by year, intelligent consideration and treatment fully commensurate



with other features of scientific advancement. Some of them are as follows: causes and prevention of insanity; post mortem examinations and pathological investigations; medical treatment of insanity; the nature and treatment of insanity produced by the use of intoxicating agents; the relation of menstruation to insanity; the effects upon the insane of the use of tobacco; on the moral treatment of insanity; reading, recreation and amusement for the insane; the classification of insanity; treatment of incurables; restraint and restraining apparatus; on the prevention of suicide; on the jurisprudence of insanity; on the statistics of insanity; on the construction of hospitals for the insane; on the organization of hospitals for the insane and a manual for attendants; on asylums for idiots and the demented; on asylums for colored persons; on provisions for insane convicts; on the support of the pauper insane; on comparative advantages of treatment in hospitals and in private practice; the advantages and disadvantages of cottages for certain classes of patients; circumstances in which the pauper insane may be properly treated with the greatest economy; on chapels and chaplains in insane hospitals; on schools and educational exercises in hospitals; the proper number of patients for one institution; the admissions of visitors promiscuously to the wards of hospitals; visits to and correspondence with patients; the comparative value of different kinds of labor for insane patients; on ventilation of hospitals and location of closets; on construction of hospitals adapted to the insane in southern climates. This list is an epitome, etiological, prophylactic, therapeutic, hygienic, disciplinary, social, economic and moral, of the whole question, and comprehends the disorder in all its relations and aspects, with the duties of the public to its suffering subjects,

and of those specially charged with their care. On all these, valuable reports were submitted, and a body of observation, experience and suggestion was evoked by their discussion.

At its first meeting, the Association, by resolutions expressing its unanimous sense, declared its position manfully regarding a question which has perhaps provoked more animated and sometimes acrimonious controversy, than any other connected with the management of the insane, holding as it did, that the true interests of the insane forbade the abandonment of all means of personal restraint in their treatment. The importance of this subject, the mischievous errors and consequences which a departure from this salutary and conservative dictum has caused, and the ignorant and prejudicial censure it has called forth from mountebanks not of the specialty who know little or nothing of the matter practically, will require yet further allusion in this review.

As evidence of the broad and liberal spirit which was present at the conception of this body, and that has always pervaded its deliberations and purposes, at one of its early meetings, after prescribing the conditions of active and regular membership, including therein all who may have at any time been superintendents of hospitals, an ordinance inviting the members of boards of managers and trustees of institutions, and of associations in any just sense affiliated or kindred in object, to attend its sessions, was adopted, and this in itself, uncontradicted by any subsequent act or utterance, is sufficient refutation of the imputation that the course of the Association has been characterized by an illiberal exclusiveness, and that its membership was a mere self-protecting guild, and not an open and candid organization for the promotion of science and humanity in one

of their most difficult and peculiarly exacting requirements.

At its second meeting, held in Washington City, in 1846, a larger representation was present, and nearly all of the institutions in the country manifested recognition of the movement. Our Canadian brethren appeared by a delegate on that occasion in the person of Dr. Walter Telfer, of the Toronto institution, and from that time to the present, the specialty in that Dominion has been thoroughly incorporated in the work of the Association. Its long line of representatives, some of whom have retired from active duty and others who have passed from the scene of life, are remembered for the zeal, ability and erudition, they displayed in the debates of the body, and those now in service are always greeted warmly, and cherished for similar qualities. Eminent among these, the venerable Joseph Workman, of Toronto, stands yet among us, by long service, large learning and wise counsel, one of the mentors of the body in which he is frequently present. Thrice in its history, the Association has held its sittings in the capitals of the Canadian Provinces, and had the privilege of inspecting some of their admirable institutions, and enjoying intercourse with that refined and hospitable people.

At the third meeting, held in the city of New York, in 1848, the proceedings developed two characteristic features of the general work and temper of the Association, both of them wholesome and beneficial in their tendency, and productive of useful results, and which have been consistently maintained. One was the condemnatory inspection of the arrangements, appliances, and system of an institution for the insane in that vicinity, and the recommendation of various reforms therein which led to their prompt adoption. A



commendable rule of the body has been to appoint its meetings near, or in easy accessibility, of one or more institutions for the insane with the object of having members examine the peculiar construction and general system of each, for instruction, and criticism as well, if in any essential respect, one was observed to require it. The Association, in wise regard of the interests of the great cause of which it is properly esteemed to be the overseeing minister and guardian, and mindful of the necessity of preserving a just and favorable temper of the public mind with reference to all forms of provision and modes of treatment of the insane, has never hesitated, when a sense of duty demanded, to remark upon inefficient and faulty institutions and practices, and in a becoming manner to convey rebuke therefor, whether it fell upon the parsimony and neglect of the people and State, county or city authorities, where, indeed, grievous faults of this kind most frequently inhere, or upon boards of management, or upon executive officers. The frank expressions of the body touching such matters, have been so justly and temperately, yet so firmly pronounced, as to carry conviction and arouse no resentments, and to eventuate in improvements and reformatations in many instances. This course has tended to elevate the general standard of asylum arrangement and management, and to generate an emulous desire of those in charge to merit the sanction and approval of a body so evidently catholic and disinterested, and zealous for the adoption of the best attainable methods. And it may be remarked, that this rigor of judgment and unsparing candor in regard to imperfections, lends no countenance to the captious objection sometimes heard, that the mission and manner of the Association is perfunctory in character, and its suggestions valueless.

The other action alluded to, was the adoption of a resolution forcibly protesting against the intrusion of political influences and considerations in the management of hospitals for the insane and the appointment of their chief officers. In this, the Association, cardinally as a principle, and as a matter of transcendent importance to the true interests of institutions and the welfare of their inmates, set its face as a flint against all manner of political jobbery in the dispensation of public charity in this humane behalf. The evil of such contact in work of such grave and delicate responsibility is so patent and obvious as to require no special penetration to descry it, but the early, outspoken and consistent reprobation of it in all forms by this Association, has doubtless exerted an influence to arrest and curtail it wherever it has threatened or appeared. In this politician-ridden country, it unfortunately has not been wholly possible to restrain this pernicious tendency, but the friends of the insane have reason to congratulate themselves, that not very often has the baleful hand of political manipulation been able to jeopard or mar the usefulness of public institutions, and discredit the cause of humanity by its pestilential touch. And as it has usually happened, the mischief resulting was so prompt and apparent, that the public sense of right and propriety has revolted, and the consequences have recoiled on the heads of the perpetrators.

In the history of effort in this country in behalf of the insane, a political dogma, honestly entertained doubtless, once defeated a great and wise measure, national in its design, which would have proved a benefaction to the indigent insane. This was regretted by those who were in sympathy with the project which it was intended to inaugurate, but this deprivation of

timely and appropriate aid for the relief of the insane, under adverse political opinion, is insignificant, when compared with the injury which political intrigue may inflict in the degradation of charitable institutions to the level of pawns, to be lost or won in the chicane of demagoguery. In the meeting-chamber of this Association, it is a proud reflection that a breath of politics has never vexed its atmosphere, or violated, in the least, the sacredness of the cause which its members are assembled to consider and advance, but, on the contrary, its faintest approach has been vigorously deprecated in all that concerns the administration of provision for the insane, and in every form discountenanced as paltry and hurtful in the last degree.

At the fourth meeting of the Association, held at Utica, New York, the first deliverance was made in regard to hospital construction, and the importance of proper systems of heating and ventilation, and a few years thereafter, the whole subject, after thorough consideration, was formulated into a series of propositions which in substance have been accepted as an architectural manual for such structures in this country. Animadversion, more or less just, and in some instances merited, has been passed on the elaborate ornamentation and extravagant cost of some of the public hospitals erected in the United States, and some who have always been quick to criticise the work of those in charge of the insane, have dwelt largely on the useless and deplorable waste of money in constructing palaces for paupers, as the current phrase described it. For whatever there may have been censurable in this regard, the fault is not imputable to the instructions or recommendations of this Association. Its propositions look to durability, security, convenience and adaptation of details for the comfort and proper care and treatment of the peculiar



population for which such structures are intended, and while recognizing not only the propriety, but the essential utility in view of their object, that such buildings and their appurtenances and surroundings should be pleasing and attractive, they lend no encouragement to the tendency to squander public moneys in the useless and frivolous architectural display which has been made matter of complaint.

An unsightly, forbidding, and improperly constructed hospital for the insane is something more than an exhibition of false economy. It is unscientific, inhumane, and unworthy of the civilization it is erected to symbolize, and the well-matured suggestions of the Association in this behalf, and the opinions from time to time expressed in its debates, admirably embody the results of practical wisdom as to the details of construction, and approve only of structures which may fitly fulfill, in every respect, the material and moral uses for which they are designed. These have stood the test of experience, and it is not probable they will be supplanted by the innovations of the theorists. The consideration of the body has been duly bestowed on the experiments which have been made in Europe, and to some extent in this country, with the detached cottage system, and while as annexes, cottages for certain classes permanently, and for convalescents, have proved proper and useful, and have not been disapproved by the expressions of the Association, it yet maintains that the proper isolation of considerable bodies of the insane, and their necessary curative and custodial treatment can only be administered effectively in structures which shelter the whole household in ready accessibility and control of those who have them in charge.

The next in order of the carefully prepared utterances of the Association refers to the subject of provision for all classes of the insane, and its cardinal features are, that they should be under the direction of a resident medical superintendent in buildings for their exclusive accommodation; that subjects supposed to be incurable should not be segregated in establishments specially set apart for them, for that reason; that no class of the insane should be confined in institutions intended for other dependent classes, and especially the vicious who are in custody for offences against the law; that in States whose extent of territory and number of population require more than one institution for the insane, these should be so geographically distributed that they may be of ready accessibility by the population of the district to be served; that all subjects of insanity proper, regardless of the form or nature of the physical ailment accompanying the mental disorder, should be accommodated in public hospitals, in which proper facilities for classification or ward separation should be provided for the different conditions.

This subject first received consideration at the sixth meeting, held in Philadelphia in 1851, but was not finally digested until the twentieth, held in Washington city in 1866. On the final vote, there was a disagreement on one proposition relative to the maximum number of insane persons proper to be accommodated in a single institution under one management. Swayed in great part doubtless by economic views, a majority held that enlargement of an existing institution judiciously located, might be carried to the extent of receiving six hundred patients of all classes, while the minority favored two hundred and fifty as the maximum number. The latter is unquestionably the correct and conservative position, and perhaps every member of the body at that time,

and since, would confirm it by his observation and experience, but it was held that the number of public hospitals that would be required under such an estimate would necessitate so onerous a draft on the public purse, that the work of provision might be retarded rather than promoted, and that it was the part of prudence to venture the experiment of hospitals larger than sound judgment dictated, in respect of the doubt of sufficient provision under other circumstances. The rapid growth of population and the consequent increase in the number of the insane, while it has not modified the soundness of the view that more hospitals and smaller numbers of inmates would conduce to better results, have practically made larger hospitals, an imperative necessity, and few or none of the public institutions in the populous States, are, or can be restricted to the smaller number originally proposed by the minority. Indeed so great has been the pressure, that on more than one occasion the Association has deemed it a duty to inveigh in the strongest terms against the evils of overcrowding institutions. This constitutes really the most serious indictment that can be alleged against the management and care of the insane in this country, and applies to European institutions also, but for which this body is in no degree responsible. By line upon line and precept upon precept, it has steadily sought to stimulate the governing authorities of States and committees to make, not only ample, but commodious and curative provision in this behalf.

The proposition of the Association in regard to the class denominated the chronic incurable insane, is broadly and wisely humane. Primarily based on the assumption that it is difficult, nay impossible in frequent cases, to determine the line of incurability, and that when it may be passed, such subjects are worthy



of intelligent and scientific supervision for their comfort, the sense of this body refuses to consign them to the probable inhospitality of separate and inferior care, institutions, which in successful experiment, have proved exceptional to the principle of this maxim, yet do not invalidate it as a wholesome rule. Its object is to protect the stricken and unfortunate against the too common degradation and destitution of the almshouse. It encounters the policy of narrow and sordid economy which too frequently is prevalent, but anything short of it would be less than the duty of a body of cultivated alienists, and repugnant to the behests of humanity and advancing civilization.

Related to this branch of its work, at a later period, during its meeting at Baltimore, in 1873, the Association delivered its view in regard to the proper disposition of insane convicts. While declaring that those whom the courts of the country should pronounce legally infamous and degraded, who might be or become the subjects of insane infirmity, should not be associated with the worthy and reputable inmates of ordinary public hospitals for the insane, that yet the cells of penitentiaries and jails were not proper places for their custody and treatment, the recommendation was offered, that special hospitals for this class should be established whenever in any State their number would warrant such amount of provision, or that States contiguous might unite in the expenditures for such project, and that in the absence of this, such subjects should be treated in a hospital attached to a prison, and not in buildings connected with an ordinary hospital for the insane. In this the injurious and demoralizing contact of the depraved with the virtuous is prevented, while the misfortune of mental disorder in the former is humanely provided for.

Closely allied to these fundamental declarations regarding the sufficiency of numbers and the modes of construction of proper receptacles for the insane, is the question of forms of efficient organization, and it is one of paramount importance. The manner of administration of a large hospital household of insane persons in its various features—governmental, medical, moral, dietetic, hygienic and police, determines in great part the measure of benefit it may accomplish. Though the subject had been much discussed with general unanimity of views as to the essential principles of such organization, it was at the eighth meeting of the Association held at Baltimore, in 1853, that the propositions thereon were precisely formulated.

The first of these relates to the trusteeship or management confided to a board of citizens judiciously chosen as worthy of public respect and esteem, and possessing the individual traits of character fit for a benevolent trust, and appointed by the authorities founding the hospital, with such tenure of position, that only a fraction may be retired at one time, thereby securing always a proper degree of experience in their responsible sphere. The duty of such a board is that of general oversight, direction and advice made under frequent personal visitation and inquiry into the operations of the institution. In its due discharge, they become and stand as sponsors to the public for the uprightness and fidelity with which it should be conducted, and in State hospitals, in order to preserve this character from reproach or suspicion, they should be wholly free from any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in their management, and should serve without compensation, beyond the necessary expense attending their services. In some of the States, Boards of State Charities with general

supervision of all charitable institutions exist, and in our neighbor of the Dominion of Canada duties similar are entrusted to an official Inspector General of such establishments. These, doubtless, have their uses, but in this country, the former should not conflict with the boards of trustees proper, of institutions for the insane, or attempt to supplant them in their special management, by the exercise of supervisory authority over them and their executive officers. The evil of such injudicious intervention is a division of managerial responsibility, and the confusion and disturbance of the public mind which, in effect, impairs all proper responsibility. The tenets of the Association do not ignore such general boards in their proper field, but adheres to the principle that each institution may be best conducted by a trusteeship of its own, to whom their officers and agents shall be directly amenable, and from whom the public may exact an upright stewardship under the confidence reposed.

To a Board thus organized is entrusted the selection and appointment of the physician-in-chief under the title of the medical superintendent, and to that officer, as the responsible executive head, is given the selection of his assistants of every degree in every department of hospital service, with the unrestricted power of discharge of all subordinates in inferior capacities. In a large majority of the States, this salutary principle prevails in the statutory enactments relating to hospitals for the insane. In some others, it is unwisely modified, confiding the power of appointment of superintendents and some of the superior officers to the governor. In addition to the mischief of political influence which such a system constantly threatens to infuse into hospital management, it mars the integrity of organization and is a perpetual menace of discord

and division of authority, and consequently of responsibility. An executive officer independent in the source of his authority of a directory board, and a board which may refuse to endorse his official conduct, and possessing only the power of petition and complaint for his removal, and subordinate assistants in the institution who derive their positions from the same power which appointed two superior functionaries over them, constitute a magazine of materials from which only a fortuitous combination of favorable circumstances and amiable and compliant qualities of character can avert an explosion. The plan of the Association recommends itself by its simplicity, and limited liability to the evil of conflicting authority and irresponsibility. The sovereign power, so to speak, is lodged under law with the board. It appoints its own chief agent, and holds him chargeable with his trust. He appoints his aids and, in turn, requires of them a strict accountability. The wide range of almost absolute authority vested in a medical superintendent is inherently necessary. A military camp, nor a man-of-war does not more require the rigid observation of regulation and discipline under a single head, than an insane household and its numerous and various employees; and the exercise of such authority requires his residence and almost constant presence in or near the scene of his duties. The whole scheme of organization propounded by the Association is so nearly perfect, that it has met with general acceptance in all its leading features, and where changes have been made from other systems, it has been towards the line of conformity to it.

Whilst the views and experience of the Association at large have found impress in its dicta regarding construction, conditions of provision for the insane, and hospital organization, it is but just to acknowledge, and



this body and the specialty in America take pleasure in doing so, that the chief merit in their careful elaboration, is due to the distinguished and venerable Dr. Kirkbride, who in the midst of the exacting duties of the superintendency of one of the largest institutions in this country, made of these important subjects a special study, and whose published work on Hospitals for the Insane is one of the elements of his eminent title to the gratitude of the friends of that afflicted class.

As early as the fifth meeting of the Association, held in Boston, in 1850, the attention of the body was invited by Dr. Ray to the state of the law as it effected the civil rights, condition and interests of the insane, and the necessity of its modification into harmony with the generally accepted doctrines of medical science. At the seventeenth meeting held in New York, in 1863, a committee composed of a member from each State was appointed to frame the project of a general law, after thorough examination of the deficiencies held to exist in the then existing statutes in the various States, and at the next meeting held in Washington city, in 1864, through its chairman, Dr. Ray, that committee submitted a report. An appreciation of the great importance of the subject, and the delicacy of the function about to be assumed, that of propounding changes, more or less radical, to legislative bodies, touching a question whose incidental ramifications involved wide and diverse interests, elicited long discussion, and led to a postponement of decisive action until the twenty-second meeting held in Boston, in 1868. There the propositions in the report were again duly debated, and after various modifying amendments of almost every section, were unanimously adopted, and presented as an embodiment of the views of the Association on a

matter whose intrinsic legal difficulties have vexed the jurisprudence of every country.

The first twelve sections of the projected statute recommended for enactment, refer exclusively to the confinement of insane persons to institutions for their curative or custodial care; for the legal examination of the condition of those who are held in such institutions; and the legal instrumentalities for effecting their release should examination prove that they are unjustly detained, or that further detention would be useless or harmful. Their mature wisdom, science, humanity, and justice alike to the insane, and the sane allied to them by kindred or affection, and the general public as well, can not be successfully controverted, nor do they transgress improperly the most jealous view of the inalienable rights of personal liberty which the law assumes to protect. They do not propose to abrogate the great writ of *habeas corpus*, but to render its exercise unnecessary in a character of cases where its abrupt and arbitrary use is so likely, and so liable to be immediately harmful to its supposed beneficiary, and generally prejudicial to all concerned in him, and probably scandalous to the institution involved. They impose conservative guards on original commitments, provide for candid and thorough investigations, and afford ample and prompt relief in cases shown to demand it. Some of their features have found favor in quite a number of the States, but the sensitive fondness for antiquated precedents, of the profession which boasts its science as "the perfection of human reason," and whose members usually compose two-thirds of all the legislative bodies in the country, and whose work frequently produces a mystification in laws to which the confusion of Babel would have been concord, and Cimmerian darkness as mid-day splendor, have thus far pre-

vented their general acceptance. They are sound enough, however, to bide their time.

The succeeding four sections comprise a provision for the protection of the insane when arraigned on criminal indictment, where the offense shall be satisfactorily proven to be the result of insanity; proceedings for an exhaustive judicial examination by patient scientific methods of the so much abused plea of insanity in extenuation of crime; and regulations prescribing the confinement of persons acquitted of crime on that plea, and imposing wholesome restrictions on the facility of discharge. For centuries past, criminal jurisprudence has received no amendment more judicious and wholesome, nor more imperiously needful in this country than these sections offer it. As now administered with reference to insanity, it is the opprobrium alike of law and medicine, and frequently repugnant to common sense as it is offensive to justice. The wire-drawn refinements of the average legal mind however seem to be too delicate and devoted to technical subtlety to appreciate and accept suggestions so simple and straightforward for the attainment of truth and the ends of justice. The remaining five sections relate to the appointments of guardians and committees for insane persons with reference to their persons or property, their participation in and liability under civil contracts, and the legal test of their testamentary capacity. These are obviously wise, and the last is founded on extended scientific observation of peculiar forms of insanity, but professional adherence to ancient forms and hoary ideas have obstructed in great degree, their adoption.

The spirit and tenor of this project of a law or laws, assume as an indisputable fact, that insanity is a disease, and that it is not unbecoming or officious for men of observation and science with respect to it, to suggest to



the makers and expounders of law conclusions founded on its phenomena, as the true philosophy of rules of law and proceedings thereunder, applicable to the various social relations of its subjects. The science of law continually calls to its aid the ministers of medical science in the elucidation of the complex problems in which insanity is a factor, and this is a modest but maturely deliberated effort to recast certain features of necessary general laws regarding it, in the light of advancing knowledge of the disease. The jurisprudence of insanity, however, hallowed and inviolable the domain of other departments of law may be held by its exponents, can not afford to adhere to the judicial apothegm, *stare decisis*. It must progress, or be reduced to confess, that it is capable only of arbitrariness and caprice of opinion in a character of cases in which injustice is abhorrent above all measure. In criminal proceedings especially, these suggestions seek to rescue the medical expert from the false position in which he is almost inevitably placed, as the professional representative, either of the defendant or the State, and to make his science and skill, whatever it may be, the unimpeachable "friend of the court." Objects so just in themselves, as those aimed at in these propositions of the Association, may be delayed, but they will ultimately be attained, and the sagacity of this project, in its general scope, be amply vindicated.

At the twenty-fifth meeting, held in Toronto, in 1871, the Association adopted resolutions favoring an addition to the curriculum of schools for medical instruction, and a full course of lectures, didactic and clinical, on insanity, as a requisite for the degree of Doctor of Medicine, and quite a number of the more prominent institutions have adopted the suggestion. The necessity of immediate home treatment of a class of disorders so preva-

lent and liable in all ranks of the community, and the frequent benefit and relief afforded by early and skillful attention, together with the important duty of inquest and certification of subjects for hospital commitment, require that a knowledge of them should be a part of the education of physicians generally, and in this utterance, the body again illustrated its lofty sense of the dignity of the specialty, and the truth of the declaration of Grotius, that "the care of the human mind was the most noble branch of medicine," and exemplified its freedom from a narrow exclusiveness and desire to engross within hospital enclosures the entire work of management and care of the insane.

These references constitute but an incomplete glance at some of the leading features of the great work undertaken by the body, which, under various and serious obstacles, have been successfully established, and have placed psychiatric medicine and systematic, economical provision for the piteous subjects of its care in America, abreast of other departments of the science, and in advance of all other organized charities. The spirit of effort in its special sphere has "been broad and casing as the general air," but in its measures, patient and conservative, and content with a steady progress. The reformatory labors of Pinel and the Tukes, and of Chiaragi, to whom in the merciful enterprise of reinstating the insane in the brotherhood of man, too little praise has been given, made unnecessary at the period of the origin of this Association, radical and crusading movements, but in a comparatively new nation, whose civilization was crystallizing, the clearest judgment was required to incorporate this work as one of its permanent and shining elements. Who can contemplate the expanded area of its operations to-day, and deny that it has been admirably done, or refuse to admit

that the quiet and persistent influence of the councils of this Association has been the chief agency? The roll of the thirteen who laid the corner-stone of this, the pioneer national medical organization on this continent, now numbers one hundred and fifteen members, representative of one hundred and thirty institutions, public and private, inclusive of annexes, in the United States and Canada, where there was then but twenty, and the census statistics of 1880 show those in this country to have accommodated 41,000 patients.

The exclusive credit of this vast system of philanthropy is not arrogated. The better instincts of so great a people could not be laggard in a humane need so urgent, but the springs of public confidence on which it is supported and extended, are mainly within this body, and the perfection of its methods is the fruit of its deliberations. Not alone has its influence been healthfully exercised in toning public thought, and inspiring proper legislation, and in inculcating the maxim that the insane are justly the wards of the Nation and of States, its annual consultations tend to energize the individual workers, to better equip them for duty, by the mutual scientific and practical enlightenment imparted, and to beget the generous emulation which promotes excellence. In this species of refreshment of the spirit, the meetings of this Association are to its members what pilgrimages to Mecca are to the devout Mussulman, and the blessing is diffused to the recipients of their labors. The truth of this will be avouched in the experience of each member. It is of the history of this body that its convocations have been characterized by remarkable freedom from all personal, professional or sectional jealousies and antipathies. Here has been a common altar, on which has been laid the contributions of each



as the common property of all, and upon it the fire of professional zeal is perpetually aflame.

The period of its life has witnessed a wondrous progression in every department of mental activity, and has been bounteously enriched with the multiplying marvels of applied science. The genius of daring inquiry has invested every known theme of human interest with an eagerness unmatched in any former time, and unequalled in results. In the fields of biology and sociology, the brilliant investigations of Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Hæckel and Spencer, and their far-reaching conclusions and systems of philosophy, have profoundly affected the empire of scientific thought. The cell-dogma of Schleiden and Schwann promulgated a few years before, was barely accepted at the birth of this Association, but since then, the researches of the microscope in histology, minute anatomy, physiology and pathology have revolutionized medical theories, and with its companion the spectroscope, has unveiled new forms and unfolded new worlds in the physical kingdom. The more acute analysis of disease and semeiology made possible by this knowledge of intimate structure, has discredited in great degree, the humoral and vascular pathologies so long ascendant, and demonstrated the nervous system in its myriad connections and manifold sympathies, to be predominant in influence in health and disease. The study of neuropathology proper in the past thirty years, and the investigations of Broca, Charcot, Hughlings-Jackson, Ferrier and others of scarcely less note, upon structure and function of the cerebro-spinal system, and of those in psychiatry and neuropathy by eminent English and American alienists, whom it were invidious to name where so many are worthy, and of their collaborators on the continent of Europe, Griesinger, Schroeder Van

der Kolk, Carlo Livi, Bonfigli, Tamburini and others, have bestowed an inestimable wealth of ripe learning on medical science, and advanced the specialty to the front rank among its departments. Its standard literature has grown copious, and periodicals of the highest order devoted wholly to it, are rapidly multiplying, there being three in Great Britain, as many in France, Germany and Italy each, and five in America.

In equal pace with this notable progress in its domain, the Association has marched in appreciation and appropriation to practical uses, of all that has proved valuable in these explorations and observations. In proportion, and according to the facilities afforded, its membership has offered their due quantum of pathological research and original comment. Its papers, published and unpublished, and the debates thereon, comprise every important topic, and evince an erudition and ability proudly comparable with those of any scientific body in Europe or America. Its influence is lent to favor the employment of special pathologists in connection with institutions for the insane, that these may become disseminators of scientific lore, as well as hospitals for the succor of the afflicted. New therapeutic agencies and systems—medicinal and moral—have ever received full consideration and experimentation, and generous sanction when approved. Its collective judgment has not been unduly dazzled by attractive novelties, or seduced by visionary projects, yet nothing in its career justifies the imputation that it ignores the behests of advancing science, or is wedded to obsolete ideas and methods.

Regarding one subject—the entire disuse of mechanical restraint in the management of the insane—its expressions voice the almost unanimous sense of skilled American alienists, and is in antagonism to that

of quite a number of distinguished and estimable gentlemen in Europe. This is an admitted vexed question here and there, where it is warmly discussed. Viewed from different standpoints, it is as puzzling a problem as the rule in Shelley's case and the doctrine of contingent remainders to our brethren of the law. A recapitulation of the facts adduced and arguments advanced on either side would not be pertinent in the scope of this address. Two or three incontrovertible propositions however may be stated. While, if it were held feasible and judicious, every asylum officer would abolish restraint totally, and does endeavor to reduce its use to the minimum, the principle of restraint in some form is the fundamental idea in the care of large numbers of the promiscuously insane. Their collection and isolation, whether in hospitals, cottages or colonies, implies control. Secondly, no successful example has yet been produced of absolute non-restraint, manual or mechanical, for any considerable time in a company of mixed insane patients, where calamitous accidents and corporal injuries have not been the consequence. Thirdly, there are types and stages of insanity, in which temporary seclusion and mechanical restraint are humane and curative agencies. In the insane in older countries, gathered from populations for ages in degraded social caste and semi-serfdom, there may be a psychical docility and tractability even in mental aberration in all of its forms, which permits personal restraint to be wholly dispensed with. It is the candid experience of the body of American hospital superintendents, that such conditions do not exist, or prevail universally in the insane population of this country.

The clamor for the institution of so-called reform in the total abolition of restraint, incited in mingled ignorance and malevolence, has vented much objurga-



tion against this position of the Association, and sought to cast odium on institutions for the insane, and arouse popular distrust and hostility. Medical men, regardless of the canons of the code of ethics, have participated in these unjust but futile crusades, and may be left in silence to their chagrin. It was a fitter work for politicians and sensational pulpiteers, and a class of pragmatical persons of both sexes, or rather of whom it may be conjectured they were in character bisexual, to invent crude schemes for the prevention of insanity, and sermonize and drool over imaginary needs for the protection of the insane. There are some who think, with their aid, the counsels of the Almighty in creation or the order of evolution, might have been amended, but usually they do not discern true reform, or effectually accomplish it. The world will wait in vain for improvement in modes of mitigating the sum of insanity, or promoting the welfare of its sufferers, in dependence upon pretentions and empirical precepts from such sources.

Amid all the din and pother under the name of "rights of the insane," and their protection against improper confinement and abuse, and the prurient itch for innovation on methods approved by experience, and the fantastic foolery of spurious reform which now and then escapes from the disturbed brains of half-recovered patients, and becomes a squirming maggot in brains which claim to be sounder, this Association has preserved its equanimity. The prime and indefeasible right of every insane person is to have his or her diseased condition recognized and respected, and all other rights pertaining must revolve about that one. This can only be judged and passed upon by medical men. In the restriction of personal liberty it involves, they have the right to be protected from its

undue prolongation, the right to skillful and humane treatment, the right to such exercises and privileges of a wholesome and elevating tendency as they may have been accustomed to, and the right to intercourse with and visitation from friends. All these must be under the direction of medical men. Wise statutes regulating these and the countervailing rights of society must emanate from the experience of medical men conversant with the disease. Upon these principles, the enunciations of this body stand as on a bedded rock, against which cant and jealousy and prejudice will beat harmlessly.

The executive officials of institutions for the insane are clothed with functions of great responsibility and extreme delicacy, and are the true conservators of these rights. The large power and wide discretion inseparable from the proper discharge of their duties, engender natural distrust that these rights may suffer. The subordinate instrumentalities which they are compelled to call to their aid, are from a class whom no species of vigilance and discipline can always control in the prescribed line of propriety. Under these circumstances, "a fierce light beats upon the throne" of their station, and the journalism of the day in its rank appetite for sensations, is quite prone to be their prejudging censors. But in no sphere of public duty has the scrutiny of investigation more frequently left its servants scatheless under charges preferred. And for such results, so solidly beneficial to the afflicted, and so assuring to public confidence, to the humane and considerate maxims of management forbidding all unkindness and cruelty, and condemning punitive measures of every form, set forth by this body, the friends of the insane are deeply indebted.

This imperfect review of the labors of this Association and exposition of the spirit which has ever actuated it, may appear defensive and vindictory in tone, but indeed its history needs no such feature. Such allusion has been incidental only, and properly resentful of unworthy criticism. The lunacy system, theoretical and practical, of no other country has borne a richer fruitage of successful humane endeavor, nor has been guarded in all its relations with juster circumspection, nor has tended more to exalt and ennoble the science of medicine. The conspicuous part borne in its framing and adjustment, will ever bear testimony to the loftiness of the motives and the wisdom of the councils of this Association. In this great philanthropic mission, its past at least is secure, and in duty to itself, it should preserve the just temper and moderation which has been so eminently displayed in its proceedings, and permit no internal dissension as to matters trivial, to deflect it from its leading objects, and no external disparagement and denunciation, however ingenious or vehement, to discourage its purpose, or sow the seeds of its dissolution.



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